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ABSTRACT

This document on Spain is one of a series of five published by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. The document includes five chapters, three appendices, descriptive form sheets for five distance learning projects, and a summary. Chapter 1 provides the introduction to the report. Chapter 2 describes small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and craft undertakings in Spain, vocational education and training, and distance training. Chapter 3 describes distance training for SME managers in Spain. The demand for distance training for SMEs is described in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents 18 conclusions, such as the lack of employer organizations and the great shortage of courses specifically designed to meet the training needs of entrepreneurs and managers. Appendix 1 provides a 13-item bibliography. Appendix 2 lists 15 individuals who were interviewed to determine the demand for distance training for SME management staff. Appendix 3 describes the Spanish government's powers in education. (CML)

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CEDEFOP Document

Distance training for management in small and medium-sized enterprises and craft undertakings in Spain

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

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Distance training for management in small and medium-sized enterprises and craft undertakings in Spain

The study was conducted in cooperation with the Centro de Enseñanza a Distancia (CEAC).
The report was drawn up by
Jaime Sarromona and **Julia Ferran Ferrer**
The project was coordinated by Duccio Guerra (CEDEFOP)

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Introduction

The important role of small and medium-sized undertakings in the economy has created a growing interest in this sector.

At a time of recession, their flexibility has served as an economic buffer and, with economic revival, that flexibility is a decisive factor in their development.

The European economic area, indeed, is to a great extent made up of a close-knit fabric of small industrial firms, whose vital contribution to the creation of employment and wealth is clearly apparent from the statistics. It is hardly surprising that in formulating Community policies specific attention has been devoted to launching ventures in support of small industry, as typified by the programme of action for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) adopted by the Council in 1986 and by the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the setting up of a task force within the Commission of the European Communities to promote and administer a series of development and service measures to support SMEs.

There are many difficulties in setting up measures in favour of SMEs, the first being how to 'define the field'. The parameters that have been used in the past to define small and medium-sized enterprises are no longer adequate, mainly because the dividing line between large and small concerns is based on the size of the workforce or the amount of invested capital.

Measures pertaining to vocational training are particularly complex to implement, for various reasons:

- firstly, it has not yet been fully realized that small firms are not replicas of large concerns in miniature, and that measures aimed at the latter will not be equally effective in meeting the training needs of the former;
- in second place, investment in training implies programming and action in pursuance of medium-term corporate strategies, and such planning is sometimes beyond the capacity of small firms;
- finally, small and medium-sized undertakings are rarely equipped to conduct their own internal training schemes, but at the same time they are by tradition wary of outside training.

The report presented here is based on a twofold assumption:

(i) that the success of the medium-sized and in particular the small firm depends to a great extent on the managerial abilities of the principal and the management staff, and therefore on their training;

(ii) that, because small entrepreneurs are reluctant to be involved in collective training measures and have little time to devote to training themselves, distance learning might be a highly suitable method of training for this type of user.

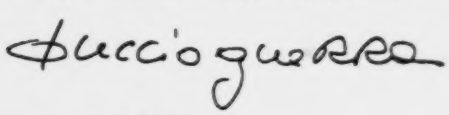
In these circumstances, we felt that an effort should be made to find out about any distance learning that is targeted at a specific group such as the principle and management of small and medium-sized business and craft industry firms.

The purpose in so doing has been to 'measure' not so much the volume of the training that is available (we harboured no illusions as to its extensiveness) as the quality of that training, and above all the potential demand for and supply of distance learning.

Finally, we have sought confirmation for our belief that the avenue of transnational cooperation within the Community should be explored with far greater determination, especially as regards the use of distance learning for training.

The report, therefore, is part of a programme covering five Community Member States: Spain, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy.

We see this first programme as the first step towards a whole series of measures designed to promote and support cooperation in the Community in the field of distance learning.



Duccio Guerra
Project Manager

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1. Introduction

1.1. Objectives

This study had four objectives, namely:

(1) to set out the situation and general characteristics of small and medium enterprises, vocational training and distance education in Spain,

(2) to identify the demand for training for managerial staff in Spanish SMEs, bringing out their needs and limitations, with special emphasis on the analysis of possible approaches to distance training for this category of staff,

(3) to identify the supply of distance training capable of meeting this demand, bringing out its special features,

(4) to note where demand and supply coincide and where they diverge.

1.2. Methodology

The methodology applied in this study was primarily qualitative, in that information was obtained through personal interviews with relevant individuals and institutions and through an analysis of the literature. The various stages of the study, set out below, show how the method was used.

1.2.1. The identification and analysis of the literature

on the themes of our study in the Spanish context, selecting those works which may be regarded as the most illustrative and up-to-date. Important features of the literature consulted are that it covers the current situation, derives from a variety of sources (the Ministry

of Industry, employers' organizations, experts working e.g. in universities, individual firms etc.) and is diverse in content (opinion surveys, field studies, the views of individuals, agreements by employers' organizations, conference reports etc.).

1.2.2. Contacts with teachers in higher education specializing in business management and the problems of small and medium enterprises, who were able to advise us on particular topics. In particular, we consulted Professor Adolfo Vilanova of ESADE (Escuela Superior de Administración y Dirección de Empresas) and Professor LLuis Tarín of EADA (Escuela de Alta Dirección y Administración de Empresas). ESADE and EADA are institutions of higher education enjoying considerable prestige in the area of management training.

1.2.3. Compilation of the questionnaire used to ascertain small and medium enterprises' training needs and their main determinants, together with the characteristics which training must possess if it is to be viable and effective. The questionnaire was reviewed on the basis of the consultations held with experts before being used in the various interviews that were carried out.

1.2.4. Preliminary study of distance learning provision in Spain, concentrating on courses aimed directly or indirectly at small and medium enterprises.

1.2.5. Selection of examples for investigation as part of

this project, i.e. those to be evaluated on the basis of the questions posed by CEDEFOP. A brief account of the process of selection and the selected examples of courses is given in chapter 3.

1.2.6. Selection of expert individuals and representative institutions able to help us determine the special features of the demand for training in small and medium enterprises.

The analysis of the demand for training, using the criteria set by CEDEFOP, was based on contacts with the three groups principally involved, namely employers, the government and the trade unions.

In the case of employers we contacted the Catalan Association of Small and Medium Businesses (Pequeña y Mediana Empresa Catalana, PIMEC), the Confederation of Andalusian Industry (Confederación Empresarial de Andalucía), the Independent Employers' Association (Agrupación Empresarial Independiente, AEI) and pharmaceutical employers' organizations in Catalonia (Associació Catalana de Farmaceutics amb Oficina de Farmacia a Barcelona).

In the case of the government our contacts were the Institute for Small and Medium Manufacturing Enterprises (Instituto de la Pequeña y Mediana Empresa Industrial, IMPI; part of the Ministry of Industry and Energy) and the National Institute of Employment (Instituto Nacional

del Empleo, INEM; part of the Ministry of Labour). Within INEM our contact was specifically with the department promoting the establishment of new businesses (Servicio de Asistencia para la Creación de Empresas, SACE).

Finally, we contacted Spain's two trade union federations, namely the Labour Commissions (Comisiones Obreras, CCOO; linked to the Communist Party) and the General Workers' Union (Unión General de Trabajadores, UGT; linked to the party currently in government, the Spanish Socialist Labour Party, PSOE). Within the UGT we also contacted the Institute of Training and Social Studies (Instituto de Formación y Estudios Sociales, IFES).

To complete the picture we felt it necessary to consult a representative of higher education specializing in the issues and problems facing small and medium enterprises. For this purpose we interviewed Professor Joan M Amat of EADA (Escuela de Alta Dirección y Administración).

1.2.7. Collection of the information needed to assess the availability of and need for distance training in the small and medium business sector through interviews with the persons already mentioned.

1.2.8. Compilation of the report comprising the outline of distance training supply and demand and the overall assessment of the picture found.

2. The Spanish background

2.1. Small and medium enterprises and craft undertakings

A description of this sector of the Spanish economy must begin with a definition of what is understood in Spain by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and craft undertakings.

Without going deeply into the qualitative factors that may be involved, businesses of these types can be defined in terms of the size of their workforce:

(a) craft enterprises - up to five workers,
(b) small enterprises - 6-50 workers,
(c) medium enterprises - 51-500 workers.

Within institutions and at conferences and symposia concerned with small businesses and their problems other and perhaps more valid definitions have been adopted. The Institute for Small and Medium Manufacturing Enterprises (IMPI), for example, defines a small enterprise as one with a workforce of no more than 50 employees, capital invested not exceeding 25 million pesetas (i.e. 500 000 pesetas per employee) and annual sales of not more than 50 million pesetas. The IMPI definition of a medium-sized enterprise sets the workforce at 51-500 employees, capital invested at between 25 and 250 million pesetas (i.e. 0.5m-2m pesetas per employee) and annual sales at between 50 and 3 000 million pesetas.

The processes of mechanization currently underway and the great diversity of small and medium enterprises make it

impossible to produce a completely reliable description and definition of this sector and its salient features. Nevertheless we adopt CEDEFOP's criterion of the number of employees.

2.1.1. Small and medium enterprises in the Spanish business context

On the basis of the simple numerical definition we set out below various quantitative data on the relative importance of small and medium enterprises in the Spanish business context.

First, 99.9% of all Spanish businesses fall into the SME category: the great mass of the problems, limitations and potential of Spanish business are thus to be found in this sector. Of this 99.9%, 97% fall into the small-enterprise category while 2.9% are classed as medium enterprises. Within the former category 71.8% of undertakings are craft (i.e. very small) enterprises on the definition we are using, which fact clearly shows the predominant form of business organization in Spain. It is thus not surprising that one of the main features of the Spanish business scene is the owner-manager whose personal future is closely tied up with that of his or her undertaking.

Second, an industry-by-industry analysis shows that the relative importance of small and medium enterprises is least in the tobacco sector, where large undertakings account for almost 20% of the total. In other sectors

the percentages are much lower, approaching the average figure given in the previous paragraph.

In contrast, there are significant differences in the relative importance of small as against medium enterprises as between one industry and another. Significant examples include the timber and cork industry (with 88.5% of undertakings in the small-enterprise category), beverages (84.4%) and paper and printing (71.4%). Sectors in which medium-sized enterprises play an important role include textiles (58%), tobacco (52.7%) and leather, clothing and footwear (41.8%).

Third, if the above data are broken down by province or Autonomous Community with a view to obtaining a more detailed picture of the part played by small and medium enterprises in the Spanish economy, the geographical variation found is in fact very small. In the relatively wealthy and industrialized Autonomous Community of Catalonia, for example, 99.86% of all businesses are SMEs, while in the economically very different region of Andalusia the figure is almost exactly the same at 99.85%. The corresponding figures for other parts of the country show little variation: Madrid province, 99.46%; Valencia, 99.77%; Zaragoza, 99.75%; Seville, 99.79%; Vizcaya, 99.01%.

Finally, moving from information on numbers of businesses to other types of quantitative data illustrating the importance of the SME sector in Spain, small and medium

enterprises employ 86% of the country's workforce, while their contribution to the economy is clear from the fact that they produce 70% by value of national exports and contribute 62% of gross domestic product.

2.1.2. Characteristics of small and medium enterprises in Spain

One of the studies which best describe small and medium enterprises is that produced by Deloitte Haskins & Sells in 1986, some of whose conclusions we feel it is of interest to quote here.

Characteristics of small firms

- The entrepreneur is identified with the enterprise: his or her personal wealth varies with that of the business.
- The entrepreneur's personal and family life is often shaped by the requirements of the business.

Advantages

- Speed of decision-making and hence adaptation to changing circumstances.
- Easy interpersonal communications and consequently reduced risk of labour disputes.
- Less risk of suspension of payments and economic breakdowns.
- Concentration on fields of activity not open to large firms.

Drawbacks

- Great dependence on large firms (e.g. for the supply and

creation of products).

- General exclusion from official contracts on advantageous terms. The small firm has largely been excluded from major decisions affecting national economic policy.
- Technically deficient management, with waste of resources, failure to set short-, medium- and long-term objectives and lacking proper quality control (small firms are often not guided by the principle of the greatest benefit for the least effort). These problems are aggravated by a lack of information on the business environment.
- Technological backwardness.
- Small entrepreneurs generally lack higher-level qualifications and devote little attention to their own training and ability to meet to new business challenges.

Problems of the small entrepreneur

- Financial problems due particularly to:
  + inadequate resources of their own,
  + lack of access to medium- and long-term credit, necessitating recourse to short-term funding,
  + Discussions with suppliers are concerned basically with the attempt to obtain more generous payment terms.

(These financial problems make it much harder for the small entrepreneur to cope with the rigours of economic recession.)

- A lack of personal and labour support, together with the problems already mentioned, may reduce the motivation vis a vis the entrepreneurial function and possible

innovations or changes of sector.

- Marketing problems: as well as the limitations intrinsic to small business there may be lack of general marketing competence inhibiting a full response to the real demands of present and future customers.

(These problems notwithstanding, SMEs have clear advantages in this field: they can offer more personalized and less standardized products, shift the focus of their activities more easily and maintain closer links with their customers.)

- Labour problems: lacking firm financial foundations the small firm does not have the economic freedom of manoeuvre needed to deal with these, in that e.g. it cannot make any rapid reduction in its workforce because its solvency would be jeopardized by the redundancy payments required. To this must be added certain special features of small businesses in the labour relations field which undoubtedly impede their activities:
  + the general lack of organization among employers (despite the existence of associations theoretically pursuing this aim), whether due to the lack of a tradition in this area or to the individualism of those concerned,
  + the low level of organization among the workers, who frequently negotiate improvements in pay and conditions of employment on an individual basis (this situation is as likely to harm as to benefit the employer).
- Problems associated with technological innovation,

following in part from the financial difficulties already mentioned.

- Management problems: the small entrepreneur has to play the dual owner/manager role despite in many cases lacking any appropriate training. Other managerial staff often also lack training.

2.2. Vocational education and training

In Spain a distinction is made between the vocational education and training provided through the education system ("formación profesional reglada"; see section 2.2.1) and the rather more specific types of job-related training provided under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security ("formación profesional ocupacional"; see section 2.2.2). The former, which is classed as form of secondary education and is aimed at preparing 14-18-year-olds for their entry into the world of work, operates in parallel with a more academic form of secondary schooling for the 14-18 age group which prepares students for entry into post-secondary education. Both vocational and academic secondary education are divided into two phases.

The system of job-related training for which the Ministry of Labour is ultimately responsible has only very weak links with the vocational education system just outlined. Its main focus is on young people and adults who are unemployed (or whose job is making changing demands) and who therefore need training specifically tailored to the requirements of particular jobs.

Figure A The Spanish education system

Age			
24+		Higher education	
23		(university and non-university)	
22			
21			
20			
19			
18			
17	COU[1]	Voc. Ed. (second level)	
16			
15	BUP[2]	Voc. Ed. (first level)	C
14			O
13			M
12	Basic	(Higher phase)	P
11			U
10	General	(Middle phase)	L
9			S
8	Education	(Initial phase)	O
7			R
6			Y
5			
4	Nursery education		
3			
2			

1. Curso de Orientación Universitaria (pre-university year).
2. Bachillerato Unificado y Polivalente (general course of academic secondary education).

Figure A, which represents the Spanish education system as it currently exists, provides an overall view of the structural framework in which vocational secondary education is provided.

2.2.1. Vocational education in Spain

The exclusive functions of the State include: "The regulation of the conditions governing the obtaining, granting and recognition of academic and vocational qualifications and basic requirements for the implementation of Article 27 of the Constitution with a view to ensuring that the obligations of the public authorities are met in this matter" (Art. 149, no. 30, of the Spanish Constitution).

The age range over which schooling is free and compulsory is set by Section 1 of the Right to Education Act: "All citizens are entitled to a basic education enabling them to develop their own personality and to carry out an activity useful to society. Such education shall be free and compulsory at the level of basic general education and of first-level vocational education and at such other levels as may be set by law".

Among the aims assigned to non-university education by the Right to Education Act is one relating to vocational training, namely "preparation for the exercise of occupational functions" (Section 2, under e.).
Vocational training is also included among the functions of university education under the provisions of the

University Reform Act, which refers to "the full incorporation of Spain into the world of modern science and scholarship through the three basic functions of the reformed university, namely scientific development, vocational training and the extension of culture". The same Act (Section 1, under b.) specifies as one of the aims of education at university level "Preparation for the exercise of professions which require the application of scientific knowledge and methods or for artistic creation".

The officially adopted aims of secondary (i.e., in the current Spanish system, post-14) education, academic as well as vocational, include the updating of courses to meet the demands of scientific progress and technical innovation, the establishment of flexible and dynamic links between education and employment by various means (appropriate course structures, work experience arrangements etc.) and cooperation in the retraining of the adults most affected by technical progress using the methods of distance learning and continuing adult education (Ministry of Education and Science, 1986, 20).

Similarly, the aims of university education include the reform of curricula and qualifications with a view to meeting social needs and the requirements of the labour market (Ministry of Education and Science, 1986, 20).

2.2.1.1. <u>The government of education</u>

The Ministry of Education and Science has recently

undergone a process of reorganization involving the disappearance, among other departments, of the Directorate General for Secondary Education, the body which had been specifically responsible for vocational education. This change reflected the government's belief that Ministry directorates should be structured in accordance not with the levels of the Spanish education system but rather with the requirements of the processes of reform taking place in this country.

Certain advisory and consultative bodies have nonetheless been retained. These include the General Council for Vocational Education, which was established in January 1986 to serve as a forum for consultation with the various groupings in society concerned with vocational training and to advise the government on all matters relating to the subject. The Council's constitution and terms of reference (Royal Decree of 27 February 1987) include the following:

- Membership: 13 representatives of trade-union organizations, 13 of employers' organizations and 13 of central government (from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security).
- Functions:
  + to plan syllabuses and qualifications covering the different levels and specializations of vocational education and to set skill requirements for job-related training (relating these as appropriate, in academic and vocational terms, to the appropriate levels of vocational education), without prejudice to

the powers in this matter of the State Schools Council (Section 2, under 1c.);

+ to make proposals for the improvement of the careers guidance service;
+ to monitor activities taking place in the area of vocational education and training.

As will be evident, the Council is concerned both with the vocational education provided in the framework of the education system (for which the Ministry of Education and Science thus has responsibility) and with the job-related training provided under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

However, the picture is complicated by the devolution of political power under the Constitution to the 17 Autonomous Communities. The Community governments have certain powers in relation to education, including vocational education, which are exercised in the framework of legislation applying to the country as a whole. The powers reserved to central government are set out in appendix 6.3.

2.2.1.2. Finance

The proportion of the national government budget allocated to the Ministry of Education and Science has declined in recent years, from 17.01% in 1981 to 15.95% in 1987 (OEI, 1987). However, in the case of secondary (14-18) education, both academic and vocational, there has been a small increase in the budget in percentage terms in the

last three or four years, following a slight decline in 1981-82. Overall the secondary sector accounts for around 20% of Spain's education budgets.

2.2.1.3. Structure

Vocational education is provided at two levels.

First-level vocational education, for 14-16-year-olds, is open to youngsters completing their Basic General Education, a 6-14 course corresponding to primary and the first stage of secondary education in most other countries. Second-level vocational education comprises two- or three-year courses for 16-18-year-olds and is mainly followed by youngsters completing the first level.

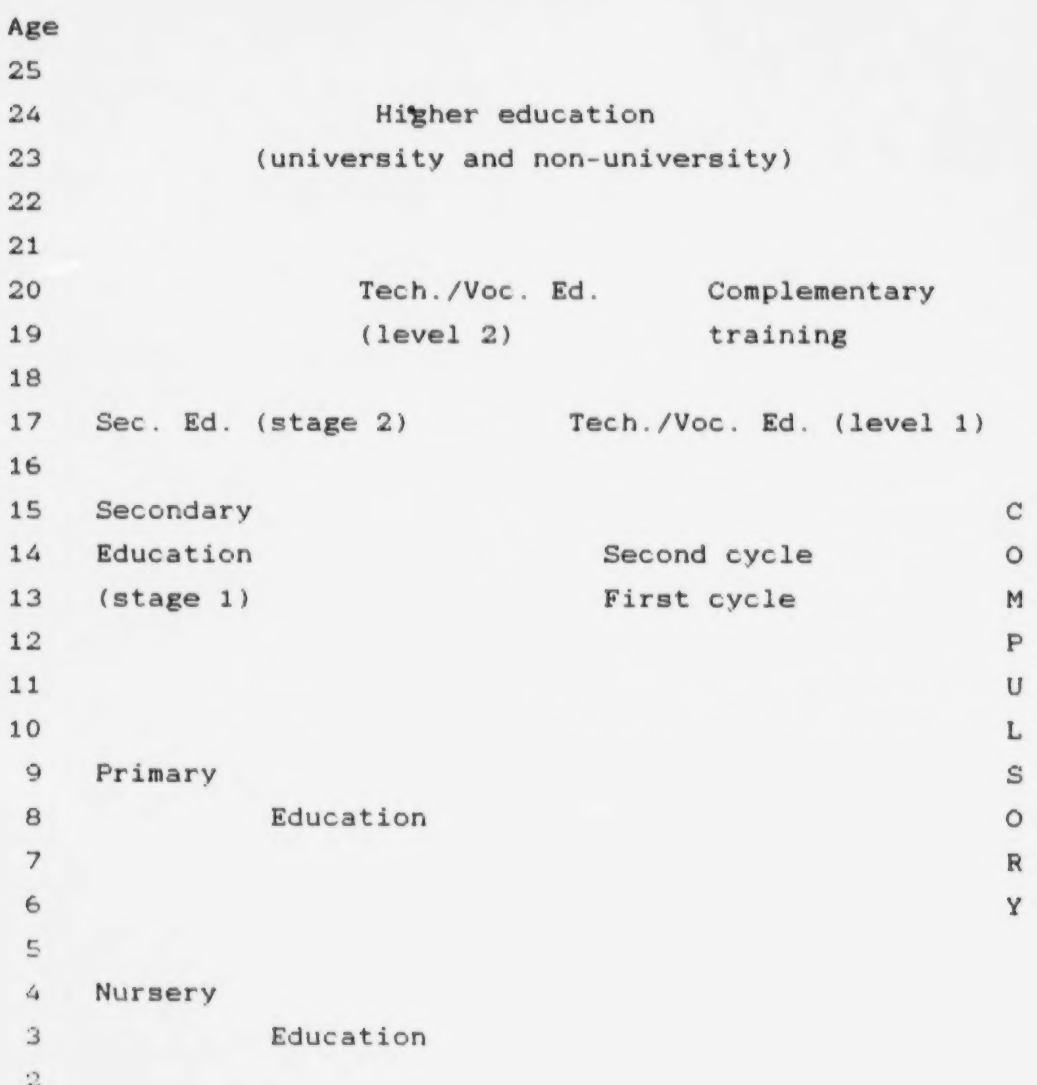
It is on completing their Basic General Education that youngsters have to opt for one or other of the two usual forms of secondary education, the more academic (the three-year BUP and one-year pre-university COU) leading to post-secondary studies or the more employment-orientated vocational education. Their choice at 14 is determined in part by the qualification obtained at the end of their Basic General Education: youngsters obtaining the "Titulo de Graduado Escolar" may choose either of the two options, while those who are awarded the lower-grade "Certificado de Escolaridad" may proceed only to a vocational school. Provision is made later in youngsters' educational careers for the possibility of a change of direction should this be appropriate.

Under the Education Act 1970, still in force, education in Spain is free and compulsory over the 6-16 age range, implying that first-level (14-16) vocational education is compulsory for all youngsters not following the more academic BUP course. In reality, however, a significant proportion of youngsters drop out at the age of 14: 13.5% in 1983-4 (Genovard C. et al., 1985). Further evidence that compulsory education to the age of 16 has yet to be achieved is provided by statistics for first-level vocational education: in 1983-4 the drop-out rates in the first and second years were 25.72% and 33.69% respectively, while 7.87% and 13.97% of students had to repeat the first and second years respectively of their courses (OEI, 1987).

Vocational education currently extends over 21 branches, divided in turn into some 270 specialist courses (Genovard C. et al.,1985). Certain of these are now in fact outdated in that they have not adapted with the necessary speed and resources to meet society's changing needs in the employment field.

At the time of writing the Ministry of Education and Science has published provisional proposals for the reform of the education system (Ministry of Education and Science, 1987). The proposed new structure is shown in figure B.

Figure B Reform of Spanish education (from 1990-91)



It is the Ministry's intention that the proposals be discussed by the various groups concerned over the next few months (academic year 1987-8); implementation is scheduled to begin in 1990-91, so that the system can be fully in place by the year 2000.

2.2.2. Job-related training

Job-related training differs from the vocational education just outlined in that it is not regulated by means of officially approved qualifications and curricula, focusing instead on preparation for particular occupations. As José Sãenz, the National Institute of Employment's deputy director general of job-related training, has said, "This is not a form of regulated vocational education but rather a work-oriented type of training, aimed at preparing unemployed adults and youngsters for jobs in sectors with good prospects" (Comunidad Escolar, 1987, 16).

In terms of numbers of activities the most important body in this field is the National Institute of Employment (INEM), part of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Its functions are laid down in the Employment Act of 8 October 1980, section 14.1 of which states that "In connection with the employment promotion programme the National Institute of Employment shall establish an annual programme of job-related training with the function of providing, free of charge, appropriate training for those seeking to enter the world of employment or, if already in employment, to acquire new skills or attain a higher level of vocational specialization."

Section 43 of the same Act states that one of INEM's functions is to "promote the training of workers, in the framework of employment policy, by providing appropriate opportunities for the up-dating, up-grading or reorientation of knowledge and skills."

While considerable official stress on job-related training has been a feature of the last few years, in fact the matter was already covered implicitly in the Education Act of 1970 (Chapter 4, Section 45): "The Ministry of Education and Science shall promote, plan and supervise the education of adults, without prejudice to the responsibilities of the Ministry of Labour regarding the training and retraining of workers in response to the requirements of employment and social development policy or to those of the Ministry of Agriculture regarding the agricultural training and advisory services."

Among INEM's activities particular importance attaches to the National Training and Employment Plan (PlanFIP), which is operated by INEM with financial assistance from the European Social Fund. The Plan is currently (1987) concerned with three types of training aimed at unemployed under-25s, both with and without vocational qualifications:

- alternance training for youngsters within their own firms (154 000 participants),
- training in centres run by INEM and in collaborating centres (regulated by Resolution of 9 April 1987 of the Directorate General of INEM) (240 000 participants),

- training in INEM and collaborating centres, with practical training on employers' premises (41 000 participants).

Both employers and participants receive financial assistance in connection with these courses, which last around one year and are aimed at providing basic polyvalent training focused primarily on new technologies.

In the framework of the National Plan agreements have been reached between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security with a view to collaboration in the reduction of unemployment. The specific aims are to coordinate job-related training with first- and second-level vocational education (with the agreement of the General Council for Vocational Education) and to ensure cooperation between institutions and teachers working under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Science and those of the National Institute of Employment.

2.3. Distance training

According to the Ministry of Education and Science, the main purpose of distance education is to cater to the needs of "those adults who, for reasons connected with their employment or for any other reason (imprisonment, desire to resume interrupted studies, etc.), are unable to attend a normal educational institution for the purpose of obtaining elementary or secondary qualifications" (Ministry of Education and Science, 1986, 22).

Three Ministry institutions exist to perform this function: the National Centre for Elementary Distance Education (Centro Nacional de Educación Básica a Distancia, CENEBAD), the National Institute for Academic Secondary Distance Education (Instituto Nacional de Bachillerato a Distancia, INBAD) and the National University for Distance Education (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, UNED). These operate a network of centres throughout Spain with a view to assisting students, in particular by offering face-to-face support. It should be noted that this distance learning system is solely the responsibility of central government: the Autonomous Communities which form the political and administrative structure of the country have not so far taken on any responsibility for the programmes and activities provided. Nevertheless the Ministry intends reaching agreements with the various Communities with a view to securing a measure of consultation and cooperation between the two tiers of government.

The analysis of recent trends in public spending on distance education is complicated by changes in Ministry of Education and Science expenditure classifications. The following figures for the percentage of public spending on education devoted to distance learning may nonetheless be taken as illustrative:

- 1984: 0.05% on "non-university distance teaching",
- 1985: 0.40% on "distance teaching and continuing education",
- 1986: 0.47% on "distance teaching and continuing

education".

As may be gathered from the outline of the educational levels covered by the distance learning system operated by the Ministry of Education and Science, vocational training has traditionally been excluded from this form of education. This no doubt explains the growth of the large numbers of private institutions seeking, with varying degrees of success, to remedy this deficiency, which have come to play a large part in Spanish education as a whole.

The private distance-learning centres are governed by a Royal Decree of 7 November 1980 and a Ministerial Order of 20 June 1981. The former includes the following definitions:

(From the Preamble) "Distance education as hereby regulated, operating in the private sector, may extend over the various levels of education with the exception of university education, whose particular nature requires that it be dealt with separately. It may encompass vocational education not geared to the obtaining of academic qualifications, together with other courses aimed at up-grading, up-dating or re-orientating vocational knowledge and skills."

(Section 2) "1. In this Decree distance education means education which does not require regular attendance at its institutions by teachers and students and is provided

through the media of correspondence, radio, television or by other analogous means.
"2. Without prejudice to subsection (1) above, the education provided by any of the means indicated may be complemented by seminars, lectures, practicals and assessment and guidance sessions involving the physical presence of teachers and students."

The great majority of distance learning institutions authorized by the Ministry of Education and Science (80 out of the 82) belong to the National Association of Centres for Distance Learning (Asociación Nacional de Centros de Enseñanza a Distancia, ANCED). Investment by ANCED members totals over 2 000 million pesetas, while 150 000 or so students participate in the 584 courses provided (Comunidad Scolar, 1986, 6). The great diversity of these courses is one of the features of private distance education, albeit the most popular areas of study - electronics, radio and television, computers, accountancy, child care, dressmaking, hairdressing and beauty treatment and vehicle engineering (mechanical and electrical) - are very largely also the courses most in demand in the officially regulated system of vocational education.

By training students for jobs ANCED's member institutions are seeking to respond to one of the most serious problems facing Spain, namely the ever-growing number of youngsters who are unable to obtain work.

There has been cooperation between ANCED and

various government bodies at regional and national level. Most notably, an agreement was signed between ANCED and INEM in 1983 (and renewed in late 1986) under which distance training is provided for young (16-20) people on work experience contracts. Time spent on work experience is remunerated and subject to Social Security cover.

Albeit not immediately relevant in this context, it is interesting to note that ANCED has also reached agreements with the Spanish Institute of Emigration (IEE), the Ibero-American Education Office (OEI) and the Recovery and Rehabilitation Service for the Handicapped (SEREM).

3. Distance training for small and medium enterprises

3.1. Identification of the examples studied

The number of organizations offering distance education in Spain is considerable; our study was concerned only with those providing training for managers of small and medium enterprises, however, so that the first step was to identify institutions in this category. As well as consulting the National Association of Centres for Distance Learning (ANCED) we contacted individuals involved in the business world with a view to determining possible examples for study. Also very useful were our contacts with the Institute for Small and Medium Manufacturing Enterprises (IMPI): this body gave us access to its databank, which contains information on a number of the organizations working in the field.

Having initially identified twenty institutions we made a selection based on a number of criteria: the subject matter of the courses provided, the status of the organization, the sector with which it was concerned and the relevance of its curricula to the needs of small and medium enterprises. The organizations which emerged from this long selection process were:

- Centro de Estudios CEAC (courses in accountancy, marketing management and sales management),
- Centro Iberoamericano de Relaciones Industriales (CIRI) (course in industrial relations),
- Departamento de Economía de la Empresa, Escuela Superior de Ingenieros Agrónomos, Universidad Politécnica de

Madrid (courses in business planning and management).
- Instituto Nevares de Empresarios Agrarios (INEA) (course in the management of agricultural enterprises).
- Escuela de Administración Empresarial (EDAEM) (course in business administration).

Personal visits were made to all these institutions, an extra effort which paid off in terms of added detail and accuracy.

We felt it would also be interesting to include Radio ECCA in our study, given its great prestige and long tradition in the field of distance education; however, since Radio ECCA does not focus specifically on the needs of small and medium enterprises, we thought it sufficient to deal with this organization in the case reports which constitute a separate part of this study.

It should be noted that while there are few if any courses or institutions concerned exclusively with distance training for SME managers, that obviously does not mean that there are none whose subject matter is appropriate to this type of training, and it is from among such courses and institutions that we chose the examples on which we focus in this study.

In fact, however, this situation exists only theoretically, since in reality the small and medium enterprise sector includes almost the whole of Spanish industry. From this we may infer that even when courses

and institutions do not refer explicitly in their syllabuses to SMEs, they nevertheless focus upon them implicitly.

The criterion we adopted for the selection of institutions for our evaluation of training provision was therefore whether or not it was useful to small and medium enterprises.

Even the National Institute of Employment (INEM), for all that it operates a wide range of training programmes linked to all aspects of employment, does not provide any course aimed specifically at SMEs. This offers a clear illustration of the situation just outlined.

3.2. Distance training for SME managers

The information given in this chapter relates solely to the selected examples of distance training already mentioned; case-by-case summaries are provided in a separate document.

To help ensure that a clear picture is given of the subject matter with which we are concerned this chapter is structured in accordance with the following issues: (1) the content and general objectives of the training programmes and justification of distance training, (2) the promotors of the training programmes, (3) the organization of the training programmes, and (4) the typology of participants.

3.2.1. Content and general objectives

In general the content of these training programmes focuses on business management and administration, though there are also more specific courses on such subjects as marketing and accountancy.

Programmes of this type have, fundamentally, one of two objectives:

- to provide initial training, albeit in some cases it may be seen as specialization,
- to provide further training to participants who have already received training of this or a similar type and who wish to prepare themselves to meet the new requirements of today's business world.

The programmes generally seek to provide SME managers with a technical training rather one concerned with social and human aspects (with the exception of the Instituto Nevares).

The various institutions justified the provision of these training programmes on a distance learning basis on the following grounds:

- to cover a greater geographical area,
- to meet the needs of participants unable (through lack of time, etc.) to attend face-to-face courses,
- to satisfy a specific need not met by the courses provided by the universities and other institutions of higher education.

One institution pointed out that more students registered

for distance training courses than for face-to-face courses in the same field. We feel this is an interesting hypothesis, though its accuracy or otherwise needs to be demonstrated.

3.2.2. The promotors

As was noted in an earlier chapter, private-sector institutions play a large role distance learning in Spain. Nevertheless, of the five organizations selected for study, two are associated with public institutions, namely Madrid Polytechnic University and the Alcalá de Henares University. The remaining three are entirely private, though one is associated with a religious order (the Company of Jesus).

All five are self-financing (supported by the fees paid by participants) and receive no state aid.

3.2.3. Organization

3.2.1.3. Economic sectors covered

Most of the institutions aim their courses at the manufacturing and services sectors. An exception - worth mentioning in the Spanish context - is the Instituto Nevares, whose programme focuses on the agricultural sector.

3.2.3.2. Type of content

Considerable variety was found in this connection, from one organization which mentioned only specific areas of knowledge (marketing techniques, manpower management etc.)

to others which also sought to impart knowledge of a more general nature. In all cases there is great concern to relate theoretical knowledge to business practice.

We feel that this variety as regards types of knowledge to be imparted reflects, in some degree, a lack of clarity as to the needs of Spanish business.

3.2.3.3. Media

Spanish distance-learning institutions do not commonly use a multi-media approach: written material (in the form of commercially available textbooks or documents specially prepared by the institution, transparencies, worksheets etc.) is the dominant medium. This general observation also applies to the examples selected for study, with the exception of one which also makes use of sound recordings.

One of the institutions studied (Departamento de Economía de la Empresa, Escuela Superior de Ingenieros Agrónomos) would like to make use of videos in its training programmes, but financial limitations and lack of technical know-how regarding their production made this impossible. The Centro de Estudios CEAC did use other media (videos, computers) in the delivery of courses other than those considered here. It may be, therefore, that the choice of media depends in part on the typology of the courses offered, in that the technical and financial costs involved do not always permit the adoption of more sophisticated media.

As for the written material used, three of the institutions produced all their own while the other two also made use of commercially available textbooks. In all cases the in-house materials were produced by the institutions' own teachers (and in one case also by specialists not attached to the centre).

3.2.3.4. Methodology

Distance learning institutions generally make available specific times for counselling and consultation, either by telephone or in person at the institution itself.

Of the five courses and institutions we examined, only two bring together groups of students on a regular basis for face-to-face sessions with teachers; of the remaining three, only one is prepared to consider this possibility for companies registering groups of staff for the study programme in question.

3.2.3.5. Diplomas

All the institutions considered issue some form of certificate or diploma in respect of the courses in question. The recognition of such qualifications depends on the nature of the institution (public or private): in the case of the two institutions associated with universities the qualification is recognized by the Rector of the university concerned, while in that of the other three it is recognized only by the institution itself (though it may be authorized by the Ministry of Education and Science).

The conditions for the issue of certificates vary from one institution to another, though all require some form of student assessment (interim tests, final examinations, coursework etc.). Participants completing a course satisfactorily generally obtain a certificate showing what standards they have achieved, though in one case the document issued merely certifies completion of the course and gives no indication of attainment.

In the examples considered the benefits to participants obtaining certificates are always implicit, taking the form of improved employment prospects, retraining etc.

3.2.3.6. Assessment of the programme

Not all the institutions considered carry out explicit assessments of their programme of training: in some cases reliance is placed solely on the more or less subjective opinion of the person responsible for the programme.

The institutions which make more objective assessments see this as important to the success of their programmes. The assessment is carried out by institution staff on the basis of questionnaires sent out to participants and of the results obtained by participants on completing their course. In general, significant aspects of the programme are evaluated, such as the general structure of the course, the materials used, general content etc.

3.2.3.7. Cost and duration

It is difficult to determine the overall cost of training

programmes, since some of the institutions operate more than one programme, complicating the calculation of the cost of teachers' services, overheads etc. In addition, differences between the institutions as regards scale of operations, numbers of students and numbers of teachers make it impossible to estimate the overall cost of programmes of this type.

Where there does seem to be a certain unanimity is in the prices charged to the client, which range from 60 000 to 100 000 pesetas depending on the length of courses (from one to two or three years). Exceptions are the four training programmes run by the Centro de Estudios CEAC, which last from one to two years and cost the student between 39 000 and 55 000 pesetas.

3.2.4. Participants

The numbers taking part in the programmes of study analysed vary considerably, from 240 to around 3 000. It should be borne in mind in this connection that distance learning courses are commonly affected by a phenomenon which does not occur (or at least is far less frequent) in the case of face-to-face teaching: a significant proportion of the students who register do not complete their courses, either because they are only interested in obtaining the materials associated with the course in question or because their lack the motivation needed to follow it with the necessary regularity. For this reason the real drop-out rates are very hard to quantify and assess, and though some of the institutions

gave us statistics with some degree of reliability (not all) it would be incautious to offer overall figures in this connection.

Of the five training programmes examined only one was aimed at a specific professional category (company manager), though an analysis of the information on participants provided by the institution in question does not indicate that they necessarily have to hold this position. The remainder of the institutions considered cater for a wider range of participants (executives, marketing managers, administrative staff etc.).

Male participants clearly outnumber female. As regards age the 18-25 group is predominant in the case of two institutions (Instituto Nevares and Centro de Estudios CEAC), while in the remaining three institutions a large proportion of participants fall into the 26-40 age group. Significant numbers of university and other higher-education students follow distance learning courses at certain of the institutions.

Finally, it should be noted that most of the institutions do not apply any form of intake selection (based e.g. on existing educational qualifications), though it is recommended that prospective students hold some form of qualification at either secondary (academic/vocational) or higher level. Only in one case are participants required to hold as a minimum a qualification corresponding to the first stage of university studies.

4. Demand for distance training in small and medium enterprises

The demand for business training, and specifically for distance training, is of relatively recent origin in Spain. The economic recession of recent years, together with a lack of preparation for the introduction of technological innovations in industry, has meant that we are faced here with a relatively new phenomenon.

As one might expect, the assessment of this demand varies from one group of economic agents to another, and it is for this reason that in the next few sections we reflect the differing attitudes of the various categories of institutions and persons consulted: employers, trade unions, government and individual experts. We deal with the subject in the order of the factors evaluated through the questionnaire we developed for the purpose, which is included with the complementary documentation forwarded to CEDEFOP in connection with this study. The information and opinions contained in the following pages are based on the interviews we carried out to assess the demand for training. At the same time we indicate the results of surveys carried out by individual experts or institutions on this question, together with views and other information culled from the literature.

4.1. Factors affecting training within enterprises

4.1.1. General factors

In the Spanish context geographical factors and those relating to manpower economics appear to have the major

influence on the implementation of training programmes, according to our respondents. The Labour Commissions (CCOO, the trade union organization associated with the Communist Party) also referred to tax legislation, proposing fiscal concessions to enable employers to implement training activities. Other factors were also mentioned by respondents, among them those relating to finance.

4.1.2. Firm-related factors

Important among the firm-related factors tending to favour the operation of training programmes are:

- size: the larger the firm, the easier it is to set aside time for management training, so that medium-sized enterprises are better able than small to make provision for training.
- the sector to which the firm belongs: firms differ in their technological characteristics and degree of motivation depending on the business sector to which they belong. Unlike our other respondents, the Labour Commissions, however, consider that this is not a major factor.
- the need to keep abreast of technological development, since this determines the enterprise's future.
- expansion or change of sector on the part of the firm. Here too training is a key element which can determine the enterprise's future.
- style of management can also be a factor affecting the implementation of training programmes, though oddly enough it is mentioned only by the EADA small and medium business

specialist.

- the need to be competitive in the market: this factor is stressed by the Andalusian section of the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Associations (CEOE).

In general our respondents did not pick out any factors which they thought had little impact on the implementation of training programmes. However, the socialist trade union organization UGT and its Institute of Training and Social Studies (IFES) mentioned the general development of the individual and the industrial relations climate existing within the firm.

The possibility of deriving economic benefit must clearly be an important (indeed, the fundamental) factor determining whether firms implement training initiatives, though it will normally appear under the guise of a desire to change sector, to keep abreast of technological development etc.

Finally, if firms' readiness to undertake training programmes is considered in relating to the sector to which they belong, the following picture emerges:

- none of the organizations consulted felt that the agricultural sector was likely to implement training programmes, despite the fact that e.g. the Andalusian section of the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Associations (CEOE) sees a clear need for training in this sector.
- the manufacturing and services sectors, in contrast,

were considered likely to be interested in activities of this type, albeit for different reasons:

+ in the manufacturing sector firms need greater technological back-up (e.g. in connection with computerization and robotization), obtain shorter-term economic benefits and face greater changes in the labour market. They may also require greater knowledge of current legislation.
+ in the services sector a major role in the demand for training is played by the importance and impact of marketing and office automation. This sector is felt to be the most innovative.

4.1.3. Entrepreneur-related factors

With regard to the factors relating specifically to the entrepreneur that have the greatest positive impact, the two trade union organizations (CCOO and UGT), the UGT's Institute of Training and Social Affairs and the Andalusian section of the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations unanimously identify the prospect of greater profits and improved economic viability as the virtually exclusive motive for implementing training programmes.

Our other respondents ignored this factor (perhaps because they took it for granted), picking out the following factors as the most important:

- entrepreneurs' own educational level,
- the information they have on training programmes,
- their knowledge of the operation of other types of

business,
- the extent of their own personal motivation with respect to such training programmes.

The factors specific to the entrepreneurs themselves which may have a negative impact on the implementation of training programmes include:
- a quasi-autonomous view of their managerial function (identified by IFES),
- a belief in the adequacy of their own knowledge and capacities, perhaps coupled with an ignorance of the contribution which training could make to their business (indicated by the EADA expert and IMPI),
- a fear that their managers might have greater knowledge and skills than they have,
- insufficient time to consider the question and reach a decision or to implement a training programme,
- a lack of drive and imagination.

An analysis of the educational and training qualifications of small and medium entrepreneurs (Bonal, R. and Oliveres, A; 1984) reveals that 21.9% have received a university-level education, 36% hold some technical or vocational qualification, 3.1% have been educated to secondary level and 35.9% are self-taught (not recorded: 3.1%). The same study notes that of the 43% of small entrepreneurs who have followed some form of continuing training, the great majority had previously received a university, technical or vocational education, with the authors describing the situation as "a vicious circle, in which the desire for

further training is associated with a higher level of education and initial training".

4.1.4. Other factors

Clearly there are other factors in addition to those already mentioned which have an impact on the implementation of training programmes. The positive ones include notably government grants (mentioned by PIMEC and the two trade union organizations) and training services provided by the National Institute of Employment or local authorities (mentioned by SACE). Negative factors include the wide gap between entrepreneurs' previous training and experience and the excessively ambitious training pro mmes on offer, the frequent failure to set priorities a ng objectives within SMEs, the lack of an infrastructure within SMEs and the lack of market research in the area of training needs.

4.2. Management training needs

An initial question concerns the extent to which priority needs to be given to the training of management staff at the various levels. Almost all the institutions and individuals consulted emphasize the need for training in all management groups.

Of relevance here is the first National Conference of Employers organized by the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations (CEOE) and the Spanish Confederation of Small and Medium Enterprises (CEPYME) in November 1986, at which a paper was devoted specifically

to vocational training. This paper took as one of its objectives "the encouragement and support of business training", and the measures proposed included one related to this theme: "Training policy should include business training which responds to the changes resulting from Spain's membership of the European Community and meets the need to encourage the aspiring entrepreneur". Finally the need was identified to "support the training of trainers and distance training" (CEOE Bulletin, 1986, 12).

A survey carried out by the National Institute of Employment (INEM) in 1984 found that the professional groups in which the demand for training was greatest were the managers and management staff of private firms, 31.62% of the total of professional groups (INEM, 1985 (a), 40).

Nevertheless, when it comes to determining the relative priority to be assigned to the training of senior and junior management, there is no unanimity among our respondents, not even between the two trade union bodies or among the employers' organizations.

Certain of the organizations consulted consider that differences relate to particular criteria: the Labour Commissions, for example, sees junior management as having priority in firms in the manufacturing sector, while in the services sector priority goes to senior management. The EADA expert believes that, since junior and senior management are in equal need of training, the approach should be clearly differentiated, with stress on the

technical side for the former and a more general approach for the latter.

4.2.1. Management training objectives

The objectives of management training identified by our respondents as having priority are as follows (some emphasize knowledge and others skills):

- the acquisition of knowledge of management techniques and the market in which the firm operates and the updating of such knowledge,
- the acquisition of general knowledge of the firm with a view to complete familiarity with its internal functioning (productive structure, profitability, competitiveness),
- strengthening participants' capacity to adapt to changes in the firm,
- promoting participants' human and cultural development,
- promoting recognition of training needs,
- promoting non-Taylorist management systems,
- changing attitudes.

This set of objectives is echoed in the study carried out by R. Bonal and A. Oliveres when they outline the kind of training programme appropriate for small entrepreneurs. It should:

- develop the skills needed to adapt to technological change,
- develop an overall view of the small/medium business (production, sales, debt collection),
- develop dialogue skills, ability to deal with other

people and techniques of motivation,
- bring together theory and practice (Bonal, R. and Oliveres, A., 1984, 136-137).

In any event it is vital that the acquisition of knowledge should be based on the practical realities found in business.

4.2.2. Priority areas and types of training

Among all the possible areas of training the following are accorded priority:
- organization (mentioned by the majority of respondents),
- high-level management,
- administration and finance,
- personnel and labour relations,
- marketing and sales,
- the European Economic Community.

This list largely echoes the training needs identified in various studies (Bonal, R. and Oliveres, A, 1984, and INEM, 1985 (a)). The latter regards business techniques as the priority area for training, among them marketing, personnel management, production control and general management. Another study carried out by INEM makes much the same points (INEM, 1985 (b)).

In the view of our respondents training in these areas needs to focus particularly on decision-making (mentioned by almost all the individuals and institutions consulted) and problem-solving, covering both attitudinal and

cognitive aspects.

4.2.3. Preferred modes of training for managers

Face-to-face training is regarded as more enriching than distance training in the majority of cases, though a number of our respondents consider that the right combination of the two approaches can also be very enriching. However, this preference for face-to-face approaches is sometimes due to an ignorance of the nature and scope of distance training. Among the reasons given for preferring face-to-face training are that:

- it is more effective and efficient,
- participants are more actively involved in their own training,
- participants can focus on their own problems,
- participants can compare notes on their experiences,
- it is more active and participative,
- it is more easily adapted to participants' needs and aptitudes.

A stronger argument for preferring the face-to-face approach, given by the EADA expert, is that attitudinal changes are very difficult to achieve using other forms of training.

From our respondents' comments the conclusion may be drawn that distance training for SME management personnel is a second best, whose use can be justified only on account of financial or geographical factors, organizational limitations or simple lack of time, though, as the

Andalusian section of the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations points out, the choice between different forms of training must also take account of the objectives of the particular courses concerned.

For the trade union organizations and some of the employer bodies distance training is as suited to the particular needs of senior as of junior management, while our other respondents felt that it was more suitable for one group or the other. SACE, for example, feels that it may be more suitable for junior management because they have more experience of training processes.

4.3. Prerequisites for management training

Implementing an SME training programme involves meeting a number of prerequisites. In the following sections we look at our respondents' views regarding those prerequisites.

4.3.1. Initiation and funding

The initiative for training programmes must come basically from individual firms, though it is suggested that employers' organizations may also have an important role in this regard given their knowledge of the training needs and special characteristics of small and medium enterprises. A lesser role is accorded to government, notably by the employers' and trade union organizations consulted. However, it seems clear that all these institutions have a part to play in the development of management training programmes.

With regard to funding, employers', trade union and government organizations are unanimous in according an important role to the government, noting however that costs must be shared by the individual firm, employers' organization and/or the participants themselves.

4.3.2. Incentives

The greatest incentive for firms to implement training programmes is clearly one of a financial nature, given the economic limitations of small and medium enterprises. Other possible incentives include labour legislation dealing with training requirements or the opportunity to take part in economic expansion programmes.

Turning to the incentives for management staff to take part in training, our respondents all consider that a basic one is that of increased opportunities to take part in decision-making within the firm. Also important is the prospect of promotion at work. The two trade union organizations are agreed in regarding improved job security as also being an important incentive, though the Labour Commissions point out that completion of a training course enhances an individual's prospects of employment with firms other than that which provided the training programme.

It should also be noted that there is no sense in remunerating such training solely with economic incentives for the manager concerned.

4.4. Necessary characteristics of distance training programmes for managers

4.4.1. Responsibility

In any training programme three stages may be distinguished, namely development, implementation and evaluation (covering both participants' results and the programme itself). Responsibility for these three stages, which we consider in the following paragraphs, need not be vested in the same persons.

The institutions we consulted are not unanimous as to who should be responsible for the development and implementation of training programmes. What is clear is that none feels that the individual firm alone cannot or should not take on this task. Some consider that responsibility should lie entirely with someone outside the firm or firms involved (the government, e.g. the Small and Medium Business Institute, IMPI; training officers in employers' organizations; Business Management Schools), while other favour a sharing of responsibility between the individual firm's staff and outside experts. In both cases the justification given centres either on the need for an unbiased assessment of the firm's needs or on the impossibility of the firm taking on this responsibility without external assistance.

As to responsibility for the evaluation stage, there is virtual unanimity among our respondents that this task should be performed jointly by the firm's own staff and external experts, provided that the latter possess the

necessary professional credibility. Only the Independent Employers' Association (AEI) sees this as purely a job for the employers' associations.

It should stressed that, as the Labour Commissions point out, participants in training must be able to collaborate both on the development of the programmes and in their subsequent implementation and evaluation.

4.4.1. Duration and cost

While it is clearly very difficult to determine how long distance training programmes should last and how much they should cost, we can nevertheless draw some conclusions of relevance to this study from the responses to our survey.

The duration of training programmes needs to vary with their objectives and content. The minimum length, it appears, should be one month and the maximum between six months and a year.

The financial cost could be in the range of 0.5-2% of the firm's budget, though we must bear in mind the difficulty of establishing such a global figure without taking into account the sector to which the firm belongs, its financial situation etc.

The manpower cost of implementing management training in working hours is not easily determined, though it should be noted that some of the employers' organizations, the Labour Commissions and SACE (the section of the National

Manpower Institute promoting the establishment of new businesses) do believe that training in working hours is possible.

4.4.2. Preferred methods

The trade union and employers' organizations, the Institute for Small and Medium Manufacturing Enterprises (IMPI) and SME experts all favour the use of audio-visual methods, on the grounds both of their technological viability at this time (more advanced systems may not yet be practicable) and of the support they provide in the form of sound and pictures ("such methods offer the best substitute for the active and participative approach", as the director of the UGT's Institute of Training and Social Studies (IFES) put it). This does not imply an exclusive use of the audio-visual approach, however, and various of our respondents see benefits in supplementing it with other media (written texts, cassettes, computer software) with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of training programmes.

The provision of a telephone counselling services is also viewed as highly desirable, while the organization of face-to-face sessions to help support and motivate participants is seen as indispensable. Without such face-to-face sessions distance training programmes would be less useful and could fail to achieve their objectives.

Finally, it is important to stress that distance learning continues to be seen by our respondents as a second best

which must be made to resemble face-to-face teaching as closely as possible if it is to achieve widespread acceptance. Asked about their assessment of distance training in terms of its potential and limitations one of our respondents (a teacher at a leading business school (EADA) who is an expert in small and medium enterprises), while recognizing its benefits, stressed that it needed to achieve greater prestige. Another major limitation of distance training is the high drop-out rate, which face-to-face sessions are considered very helpful in reducing.

While gathering opinions on distance training it became clear that some of our respondents knew little about this approach, as witness the following limitations cited by, respectively, a trade union and an employer's organization:

- "It would not be possible to evaluate correctly how participants follow such training."
- "It has its educational shortcomings."

More positive assessments focused mainly on the scope offered by distance training to professional groups who, for reasons of lack of time, geographical location etc., are unable to attend face-to-face courses.

4.4.3. Adapting training programmes to firms' needs

The general view is that programmes need to be adapted as far as possible to needs of the various types of firm, though generic forms of training may also be implemented adapted to the sector to which the firm belongs (this

greatly reduces costs). The EADA expert pointed out that the dilemma could be resolved by coupling generic modules with more specific modules depending on the sector to which the firm belongs.

4.5. Evaluation by firms of training programmes

In addition to the evaluation of a training programme which a firm may carry out by reference to the aims which it had originally set, it is obvious that any such programme may also produce unexpected or unsought results. Such results receiving favourable mention from our respondents included improvements in the firm's organizational structure, increases in production and enhanced motivation among the staff having received training. Others which may be of interest were improving the climate and of labour relations within the firm and increasing its capacity for expansion and competitiveness.

5. Conclusions

The main conclusions to be drawn from the themes discussed are summarized below.

(1) Small and medium enterprises play a major role in the Spanish economy, measured in terms both of the percentage of all Spanish businesses which fall into the SME category and of their contribution to gross domestic product. The great majority of Spanish workers are employed in SMEs. Nevertheless the major decisions taken in the framework of Spanish economic policy all too often take no accounts of SMEs. This is particularly the case as regards the firms with the smallest workforces, which represent the majority of Spanish enterprises.

(2) Employers in the small and medium business sector remain insufficiently organized, especially if we bear in mind what was said in the last chapter and remember the important role played by the employers' organizations which bring together large firms.

(3) There is a general lack of interest in training in SMEs, particularly in the smaller firms. This contrasts with the growing concern of government, trade unions and employers' organizations, which see training playing a major part in the future of Spanish business and therefore of the Spanish economy as a whole.

(4) Vocational education has traditionally had a poor image in society, thanks to an institutional structure

which caters basically for less able students. In addition some vocational courses are now out of date, in that their content does not reflect industry's current and future needs.

(5) At the same time great efforts have been made in recent years to develop the job-related training system operated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The lack of coordination between job-related training and the system of vocational education just discussed impedes the proper planning of measures to meet the country's training needs. For this reason it is vital to develop the work of the General Council for Vocational Education, and particularly the National Plan for Training and Employment (PlanFIP).

(6) On-the-job experience on employers' premises has begun to play a larger part in vocational education and job-related training. In this connection it is, however, significant that under PlanFIP fewer students "follow courses in INEM centres while gaining practical experience on employers' premises" than "receive training and practical experience provided by employers". This would imply that firms prefer to provide their own training.

(7) There is a great shortage of courses specifically designed to meet the training needs of entrepreneurs and managers.

(8) A large proportion of Spain's distance training

institutions are in the private sector, owing partly to the lack of public institutions providing vocational courses using distance learning methods. However, it cannot be said that they fully meet the real needs which exist for business training.

(9) Of importance in this connection is the agreement reached between the National Association of Centres for Distance Learning (ANCED) and the National Institute of Employment (INEM), representing as it does a form of cooperation between the public and private sectors which can give a new impetus to distance training in general and to business training in particular.

(10) An obstacle in the way of training programmes in small and medium enterprises is frequently the low level of education and/or training of the entrepreneurs themselves, who may see such programmes as having little value for the exercise of their entrepreneurial function. It is also seen as essential that training programmes should benefit the firm in terms of production and profit.

(11) There are also calls for increased government funding for training. These come particularly from employers, who in the last resort make the decisions in this matter. This does not alter the fact that the initiative must come from individual firms or employers' organizations. In sum, while the government is greatly concerned (in theory) with training, it does not always provide the tools needed to ensure that the job is done effectively. This

situation is evidenced by the lack of government funding for the private distance learning institutions which provide management training.

(12) Training needs to be fully practical in nature, rather than the simple transmission of content, while at the same time seeking to achieve attitudinal changes in the Spanish entrepreneur. These features are not sufficiently developed in the various distance training courses aimed at SME managers, which focus purely on participants' technical preparation.

(13) Widespread ignorance exists on the part of government, the trade unions and employers' organizations regarding the characteristics and potential of distance training, which tends to be regarded as inferior to face-to-face approaches and thus as a second best route useful in meeting certain needs which cannot be covered by face-to-face training. Efforts are therefore needed to improve the image of distance learning as it relates to business training.

(14) Our respondents felt that the maximum length of a distance training course should be around one year and that a multimedia approach (with a particularly emphasis on audiovisual methods) should be used. Course content needs to be geared to the business sector from which participants come. The distance training institutions do not seem to be responding to these wishes, which ought to be taken into account in planning future programmes.

However, the institutions do appear to recognize the necessity of incorporating face-to-face sessions in their courses.

(15) In general the certificates issued to participants completing distance training courses are not officially recognized. This may be a drawback for those who hope, for example, to achieve promotion within their own firm or elsewhere through having followed a course.

(16) A significant criticism of certain of the distance training institutions that we examined (and very probably also of institutions using face-to-face approaches) is the lack of rigorous course evaluation procedures: such procedures are a key element in the effective functioning of courses and in ensuring that they meet current needs.

(17) There is a general lack of awareness of the need for management training in agriculture and horticulture, and the number of distance training institutions catering for this sector is consequently very small. An industry of great importance in the Spanish economy is thus not being strengthened as it should be by such training.

(18) The typology of distance training course participants corresponds closely to the general profile of management staff, while the cost of such courses cannot be considered excessive. Why, then, is not greater use made of this form of training? The answers to this question are to be found in these conclusions, and indeed throughout the

present study.

6. Appendices

6.1. Bibliography

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6.2. Individuals contacted with a view to determining the demand for distance training for SME management staff

Adolf Vilanova
Specialist in the management of family firms and SMEs
Escuela Superior de Administración y Dirección de Empresas (ESADE)
Avda. Pedralbes 60-62, 08034 Barcelona. Tel. 203-78-00.

Octavi Mondelo Arenas
Business promotor
Servicio de Ayuda a la Creación de Empresas (SACE), National Institute of Employment (INEM)
Joaquim Pou 8, Barcelona. Tel. 301-09-35.

Pedro Acevillo
Provincial Director
National Institute of Employment (INEM)
Via Laetana 16-18, Barcelona. Tel. 315-30-62.

Joan Ma Amat Salas
Specialist in management policy
Escuela de Alta Dirección y Administración (EADA)
aragó 204, 08011 Barcelona. Tel. 323-12-08.

Angel Sanchez Marin
Secretary for Institutional Policy
Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT)
Calabria 169, 08015 Barcelona. Tel. 325-11-98.

Fernando Escalante Rubio
Managing Director
Instituto de Formación y Estudios Sociales (IFES)
Bruch 13, 08010 Barcelona. Tel. 318-40-97.

Luis Granado San Segundo
Head of Business Training Service
Instituto de la Pequeña y Mediana Empresa Industrial (IMPI)
Pº de la Castellana 141, 28046 Madrid. Tel. 450-80-48.

Oscar Martín Baranda
Head of Information and Documentation Service
Instituto de la Pequeña y Mediana Empresa Industrial (IMPI)

Francesc Padullés Esteban
Training Secretary
Comisiones Obreras (CC.OO)
Ronda Sant Pere 19-21, Barcelona. Tel. 302-13-12.

Alfonso Diaz Abajo
Director of Training Department
Confederación de Empresarios de Andalucía (CEA)
Avda. San Francisco Javier s/n. Edificio Sevilla 2, 41005 Seville. Tel. 64-20-13.

Sebastián Herrero Navas
Director of Technical Office
Confederación de Empresarios de Andalucía (CEA)

Albert Pons Valón
General Secretary
Petita y Mitjana Empresa de Catalunya (PIMEC)
Bruc 72-74, 08009 Barcelona. Tel. 318-33-83.

Enrique Medrano Garcia
Member of the board of management
Associació Catalana de Farmaceutics amb Oficina de Farmacia a Barcelona
Bruc 72-74, 08009 Barcelona.

Josep Miró Catalá
Director
Asociación Empresarial Independiente (AEI)
Pº de Gracia 55-57 7º, 08007 Barcelona. Tel. 215-31-00.

Juan Pedro Diaz Cidoncha
Director
Asociación Nacional de Centros de Enseñanza a Distancia (ANCED)
Pedro Teixeira 10 1º, 28020 Madrid. Tel. 455-31-70.

6.3. The State's powers in education

The exclusive powers of the State in the area of education (including vocational training) cover:

a. explicitly, the matters covered in Article 149.1.30 of the Spanish Constitution (regulation of the conditions on which academic and vocational qualifications are obtained, issued and approved and of basic standards for the development of Article 27 of the Constitution with a view to ensuring the accomplishment of the obligations of the public authorities in this area);
b. all the standards developed to protect Article 27 of the Constitution (right to education; freedom of education; inspection and approval of the education system by the public authorities with a view to ensuring compliance with the law);
c. conditions which secure the right and duty of knowledge of the Castilian language;
d. the general structure of the Spanish education system, the purpose being to secure implementation of Article 149.1.1. of the Constitution. Accordingly it is the job of the State to regulate:
- levels, ages of transfer and types of course;
- duration of compulsory school attendance;
- admission requirements;
- establishment of minimum standards;
- establishment of minimum requirements for teaching institutions;
e. educational planning to the extent that it forms part

of general educational planning (Art. 149.1.31 of the Constitution);
f. educational statistics for State purposes (Art. 149.1.31 of the Constitution);
g. the Senior State Inspectorate.

In addition it is the State which takes part in international relations in general, including in the area of education. It also governs and administers State institutions. Finally, the estalishment of standards for coordination, distrubution, paryment and conditions of employment of staff is also an exclusive responsibility of the State.

Source: GENOVARD, C., SARRAMONA, J., CRESPAN, J.L., FERRER, F., GOTZENS, C., Vocational Training in Spain; CEDEFOP, Berlin, 1985.

DESCRIPTIVE
FORM
SHEETS

Descriptive Form Sheet No. 1

1	Project name	Management of Agricultural Enterprises
2	Project-commissioning party (-ies), promoter	Escuelas Cristo Rey (charitable and educational foundation)
3	Managing organization, name and address	Instituto Nevares Empresarios Agrarios, Camino Viejo de Simancas Km 5 Apartado 476, 47080 Valladolid
4	Contact (name and office)	Pablo Corral Barbero (technical director)
5	The initiative is:	¦ ¦ starting ¦X¦ underway ¦ ¦ over
6	Structure of the initiative	Foundation Ins. Politèc. Cristo Rey — Colegio Mayor Loyola INEA (director) Esc. Univers. Agrícola — Vocational Training Cen. Distance training course (Technical director) (Teachers, tutors)
7	Objectives and content	- To train individuals capable of making a contribution in the

		agricultural sector in the technical, economic, social and human fields. - To provide appropriate instruments for technical and management training at a basic level. - Content is grouped into three areas, technical, management and human.
8	Distance education methods	Self-instruction.
9	Required media and equipment	Textbooks, notes, explanations (written material)
10	Trainees	Enrolled 206 / Attending 240 / Having completed 2 540
11	Training level and vocational status of the trainees	Farmers: 44% Other higher or initial training: 38% Others: 18%
12	Trainers assigned to the initiative (tutors, revisers)	Six.
13	Certification.	Diploma without official

	recognition and usefulness	academic status.
14	Total cost of the initiative	70 000 pesetas in two annual payments
15	Financing	Public / Private / Trainee quota / Other X
16	Possible extension of the initiative at national and/or EEC level	- Other details can be supplied if these are insufficient. - Wishing to participate and collaborate. - We await your suggestions, initiatives etc.

Descriptive Form Sheet No. 2

1	Project name	Courses in Business Administration and Planning (CEPADE)
2	Project-commissioning party (-ies), promoter	Trainees/Fundación General de la Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
3	Managing organization, name and address	Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Ciudad Universitaria, 28040 Madrid
4	Contact (name and office)	Jesús Lozano Local (CEPADE secretary)
5	The initiative is: ¦ ¦ starting ¦ ¦ underway ¦ ¦ over	
6	Structure of the initiative	Fundación General Director Registry Secretary Staff Management Head of Secretariat Administration (six persons)
7	Objectives and content	Theoretical and practical training in business planning

		and management.
8	Distance education methods	- Texts (books, teaching units) - Questionnaires (self-testing) - Tutorials (by telephone and letter and face-to-face) - Examinations.
9	Required media and equipment	Written texts.
10	Trainees	Enrolled: 600; Attending: c. 480; Having completed: 420
11	Training level and vocational status of the trainees	In general post-graduate or in final years of university.
12	Trainers assigned to the initiative (tutors, revisers)	Eight.
13	Certification, recognition and usefulness	Diploma in Business Planning and Administration
14	Total cost of the initiative	15 million pesetas

15	Financing	Public	Private	Trainee quota c. 63 000 ptas	Other
16	Possible extension of the initiative at national and/or EEC level	- Have cooperated with other distance learning institution for several years (Estudios Superiores de Marketing, c/Velazquez 22). - Are prepared to provide information and to collaborate. - No special conditions.			

Descriptive Form Sheet No. 3

1	Project name	Courses in accountancy, marketing and sales.
2	Project-commissioning party (-ies), promoter	Centro de Estudios CEAC
3	Managing organization, name and address	Centro de Estudios CEAC c/Aragón 472, 08013 Barcelona.
4	Contact (name and office)	Antonino Garzón (Head of Technical Department)
5	The initiative is: ¦ ¦ starting ¦ ¦ underway ¦X¦ over	
6	Structure of the initiative	Study of training needs in the market; study of the viability of a project to meet these needs; identification of a team to implement it and study of the curriculum; economic study; creation of the course, printing, publicity, registration and administration of the course.
7	Objectives and content	Accountancy course: maintaining the accounts of a small/medium

		enterprise. "Head of accounts" course: how to make use of accounting information. Marketing course: marketing techniques. "Head of sales" course: organizing sales policies and strategies within a firm.
8	Distance education methods	Comprehensive written material; assistance by telephone/mail.
9	Required media and equipment	Written text.

10	Trainees	Enrolled	Attending	Having completed
		2000/2500 pa	idem	Around 40%

11	Training level and vocational status of the trainees	22% students 13% office workers, civil servants 26% administrative Remainder: other professions 47% elementary education 11% vocational training 35% higher secondary education Remainder: other education
12	Trainers assigned to the initiative	Specific: 5 Shared with other projects: 4

	(tutors, revisers)	(NB excluding authors)
13	Certification, recognition and usefulness	Diploma without official academic status
14	Total cost of the initiative	66 million pesetas
15	Financing	Public / Private / Trainee quota 39-55 000 ptas / Other
16	Possible extension of the initiative at national and/or EEC level	The courses are provided at national level (also in Latin America).

Descriptive Form Sheet No. 4

1	Project name	Business Management Course
2	Project-commissioning party (-ies), promoter	Luis Casas Parera
3	Managing organization, name and address	Escuela de Aministración Empresarial (EDAEM), Gran Via de les Corts Catalans 1176 bis, 6º, 08020 Barcelona
4	Contact (name and office)	Luis Casas Parera (director and proprietor)
5	The initiative is: ; ; starting ;X; underway ; ; over	
6	Structure of the initiative	A-Project: Luis Casas Parera B-Operation: L. Casas, Head of Studies, and external collaborators C-Assessment: responsibility of Department of Studies (teachers) D-Development: responsibility of Development and Information Service, directed and responsibility of coordinated by the Director.

7	Objectives and content	To provide theoretical and practical training for those who work in business management or, for whatever reason, are interested in and concerned with management.
8	Distance education methods	Use is made of specific books for each subject making up the course and of written assignments, for both test purposes and as practical exercises; support is provided by the Department of studies and the appropriate tutor/ revisor.
9	Required media and equipment	Direct mailing and press advertising.

10	Trainees	Enrolled	Attending	Having completed
		3228	c. 1500	c. 500

11	Training level and vocational status of the trainees	Participants come from a wide range of backgrounds; there is no "typical" student.
12	Trainers assigned to the initiative (tutors, revisers)	Five.

13	Certification, recognition and usefulness	Diploma without official academic status, authorized by the Ministry of Education and the Government of Catalonia.
14	Total cost of the initiative	Creation and inauguration: some two million pesetas.
15	Financing	Public Private Trainee quota Other
16	Possible extension of the initiative at national and/or EEC level	EADEM and its director and proprietor Luis Casas Parera, are happy to work with any other body involved in and dedicated to distance education, will provide any information requested through appropriate channels and would be interested to receive any documents, reports etc. which can contribute to effective management and the strengthening of distance learning as a means of cultural and vocational education.

Descriptive Form Sheet No. 5

1	Project name	Higher Course in Industrial Relations
2	Project-commissioning party (-ies), promoter	Dr J. Manuel Almansa Pastor
3	Managing organization, name and address	Centro Iberoamericana de Relaciones Industriales (CIRI), Velazquez 102, 28006 Madrid.
4	Contact (name and office)	Dr Paloma Alpa Gonzalez (secretary)
5	The initiative is: ¦ ¦ starting ¦ ¦ underway ¦ ¦ over	
6	Structure of the initiative	Instruction Participants Director CIRI Teachers Teaching (Tutorials) Teachers (Assessments)
7	Objectives and content	Specialized training in industrial relations; legal and economic.
8	Distance education	Tutorials (face-to-face

	methods	classes). Teaching texts, audiovisual materials etc. Information days.
9	Required media and equipment	Books, transparencies, recordings.
10	Trainees	Enrolled Attending Having completed
11	Training level and vocational status of the trainees	University graduates; managers, executives.
12	Trainers assigned to the initiative (tutors, revisers)	36
13	Certification, recognition and usefulness	Qualification awarded by the Rector of Alcalá de Henares University.
14	Total cost of the initiative	98 000 pesetas.
15	Financing	Public Private Trainee quota Other Self-financing by participants.
16	Possible extension of the initiative	The Centre is prepared to provide information and to

at national and/or EEC level	cooperate in other ways.

SUMMARY

Objectives

1. To set out the situation and general characteristics of small and medium enterprises and craft undertakings and the current and proposed structure of vocational training in Spain.
2. To describe the current situation of distance learning in Spain as it relates to vocational training.
3. To identify the demand for training for management in Spanish SMEs, bringing out their needs and limitations, with special emphasis on the possible contribution of distance training in this area.
4. To identify the supply of distance training currently available to meet this demand.
5. To note where demand and supply coincide and where they diverge.

Methodology

The methodology applied in this study was basically qualitative, in that information was obtained through personal interviews with relevant individuals and institutions. Use was also made of the specialized bibliography. The various stages were:

1. Identification and analysis of the specialized literature on the themes of the study.
2. Contacts with teachers specializing in business management training with a view to identifying relevant variables in the Spanish context.
3. Compilation and validation of the questionnaire used to

determine small and medium enterprises' training needs; use of the questionaire in interviews.
4. Study of distance learning provision concerned with the needs of small and medium enterprises.
5. Selection of representative examples (case studies) for analysis on the basis of the questions posed by CEDEFOP.
6. Selection of expert individuals representative of business training able to help us determine the special features of the demand for training in SMEs. The organizations contacted were in the areas of government, employers' associations, trade unions and specialist teaching.
7. Collection of information and comparison of supply and demand.
8. Compilation of the report.

The SME and craft sector in Spain

On the basis of CEDEFOP's quantitative definition, medium enterprises account for 2.9% of all Spanish businesses, small enterprises for 25.1% and craft undertakings for 71.8%. The percentages vary from one sector to another, but overall SMEs and craft undertakings employ 86% of Spanish workers and account for 62% of GNP and 70% of exports.

The problems facing SMEs include the challenge of technological modernization and the lack of any staff training tradition. In dealing with these problems SMEs have to cope with financial difficulties and a lack of organization among employers. At the same time SMEs have

greater capacity to resist suspension of payments, greater speed in decision-making and greater flexibility in adapting to changing circumstances.

Vocational training in Spain

Spain's education system includes a form of vocational education and training for youngsters in the 14-18 age group who have completed their basic general (6-14) education; extending over two stages and leading to an official qualification, "formación profesional reglada" operates in parallel with a more academic form of secondary education. Outside the education system job-related training ("formación profesional ocupacional") is provided under the auspices of the National Institute of Employment (INEM), part of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security; it is directed towards young people and adults who are unemployed or whose work is making changing demands and seeks to prepare them for particular jobs. For the most part job-related training is provided under agreements with individual firms and training centres.

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for vocational training within the education system in such aspects as qualifications, recognition of specialities, conditions of service for teachers and so on, but there also exists a General Council for Vocational Education, established in January 1986 as a forum for consultation with the various groupings in society concerned and to advise the government; its remit covers both vocational education and job-related training. The role of the

Ministry varies from one Autonomous Community to another (there are 17 such Communities in Spain), depending on the extent to which powers in education have been devolved. Spending on secondary education (academic and vocational) accounts for 20% of Spain's education budgets.

At the time of writing the Ministry has initiated a debate on the reform of the education system outside the universities. This will affect vocational education, since the reform envisages extending compulsory general education to the age of 16, albeit it would not come into force until 1990-91 and would not be fully implemented until the end of the century.

Role of distance learning in vocational training

Distance education in the public sector has thus far concerned itself with preparing students for academic qualifications at elementary, secondary and university level rather than with vocational training. The private sector, in contrast, has a strong tradition in this field.

Private-sector distance education is governed by official regulations which state that it may "encompass vocational education not geared to the obtaining of academic qualifications, together with other courses aimed at up-grading, up-dating or re-orientating vocational knowledge and skills."

Almost all distance learning institutions in the private sector belong to the National Association of Centres for

Distance Learning (ANCED). Investment by ANCED members totals over 2 000 million pesetas, and around 150 000 students participate in the almost 600 different courses provided. ANCED has concluded a number of agreements with the government, notably with the National Institute of Employment (1983 and 1986).

Availability of distance training for SMEs; case studies

Examples of distance training were chosen on the basis of such criteria as the subject matter of the courses provided, the status of the organization, the sector concerned, relevance to SME needs and the methodology used. The distance training institutions selected were:

- Centro de Estudios CEAC (courses in accountancy, marketing and sales management),
- Centro Iberoamericano de Relaciones Industriales (CIRI) (course in industrial relations),
- Departamento de Economía de la Empresa, Escuela Superior de Ingenieros Agrónomos, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (courses in business planning and management),
- Instituto Nevares de Empresarios Agrarios (INEA) (course in the management of agricultural enterprises),
- Escuela de Administración Empresarial (EDAEM) (course in business administration).

It was decided to include Radio ECCA in the study, given its great prestige and long tradition in the field of distance education; as well as general courses, Radio ECCA's programme includes courses in management.

While the programmes of distance learning institutions rarely specify that they are aimed at SMEs, the examples selected are of value to such enterprises by virtue of their course content.

Analysis of the distance training currently available to SMEs brings out the following points:

- Course content focuses primarily on business management and administration, followed by courses in marketing and accountancy. The aim is both to provide initial training and to update knowledge and skills.
- The programmes are chosen in response to demand, either because they are not available as public-sector face-to-face courses or because such courses do not meet the needs of individuals unwilling or unable to attend in person.
- The institutions chosen, albeit two are associated with universities, are self-financing on the basis of charges to participants and receive no state funding.
- Most of the institutions aim their courses at the manufacturing and service sectors; an interesting exception is the Instituto Nevares, which aims its course at the agricultural sector.
- Written material is the predominant medium (there is one exception, where use is also made of sound recordings). The texts are generally prepared specifically for the course in question, though in some cases use is also made of commercially available texts. Other media are avoided both on financial grounds and on grounds of practical educational considerations.
- Provision is generally made for counselling and

consultation (by telephone or correspondence or face-to-face). Among the cases studied, two include face-to-face sessions with the teachers responsible for the course.
- While not all the institutions considered carry out assessments of their programmes, evaluations of various kinds are made. Students completing courses obtain a diploma which is authorized by the Ministry but is not otherwise officially recognized; only the two institutions associated with universities obtain recognition from their Rectors.
- Costs vary from 40 000 to 100 000 pesetas for courses lasting 1-3 years.
- Numbers of participants range from 240 to 3000, depending on the course and the institution. A fairly large proportion of registered students do not obtain any diploma. In the case of two of the institutions the majority of participants are in the 18-25 age range, while in that of the remainder the majority are in the 26-40 group. There is no intake selection, though it is recommended that students hold certain previous qualifications.

Demand for distance training for SMEs

Concern with training, and particularly distance training, is a recent phenomenon in the SME sector. For this reason we consulted persons and institutions representative of the sector with a view to obtaining reliable information. Our contacts were with:
- the government, through the Institute for Small and Medium Manufacturing Enterprises (IMPI) and the National

Institute of Employment (INEM),
- employers, through the Catalan Association of Small and Medium Businesses (PIMEC), the Confederation of Andalusian Industry (CEA), the Independent Employers' Association (AEI) and the Barcelona Pharmaceutical Association,
- trade unions, through the General Workers' Union (UGT) and the Labour Commissions (CCOO),
- a specialist teacher at a business management college.

Our conclusions from these contacts can be summarized as follows:
- The economic sectors most receptive to training are manufacturing and services, for reasons of technological and market competitiveness. However, there is a growing need for training in the agricultural sector. Firms' size and profitability condition entrepreneurs' attitudes to training.
- Certain entrepreneur-related factors may stand in the way of training, notably a lack of information, a quasi-autonomous view of their management function, a lack of drive and a fear of being overtaken by subordinates. Only 30% of small and medium entrepreneurs are university-educated, while 36% have no formal education.
- Other obstacles to training in SMEs include the poor match with the specific objectives of SMEs, a failure to prioritize such objectives and a lack of infrastructure within SMEs.
- There is no unanimity on criteria for giving priority in training to senior or to junior management. Both have training needs, albeit training content could be more

generalist in the case of the former and more technical in that of the latter.

- Requirements regarding content focus particularly on business organization and management, adjustment to technological change, the development of dialogue skills and the ability to deal with people, knowledge of market requirements and trends and the European Community.
- There is general unanimity that the initiative for training should come from the individual firm, though responsibility for funding could be shared between the firm (or employers' organization), the government and the individual participant. A major incentive for the individual is the opportunity for increased participation in decision-making.
- In general face-to-face training is regarded more favourably than distance training, albeit the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Associations (CEOE) suggests that the latter should be expanded to increase the range of training available. The reasons for this preference are easier adaptation to participants' needs and aptitudes, the possibility of personal interaction, active involvement in the training process, scope for dealing with individual problems, greater impact on attitudes, etc. Overall distance learning is seen as a second best whose use is justified only by economic, geographical or other constraints.
- While SMEs are unable to play much part in elaborating distance training programmes, they can take part in the evaluation of their results.
- There is a need to incorporate audiovisual media in

distance training programmes, without excluding written material. Telephone advice services are seen as valuable, and face-to-face sessions essential.

CEDEFOP — European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Distance training for management in small and medium-sized enterprises and craft undertakings in Spain

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